



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



LITTLE AGNES

LAURA COOMBS HILLS

THE old saying that artists, like poets, are born, not made, is verified in the career of Laura Coombs Hills, who without question ranks among the leading miniature painters of today.

It was just twenty-two years ago that Miss Hills painted her first miniature. She had been in England on a visit and a young English girl, seeing some of her work, had asked her why she did not paint miniatures. Her reply was that she did not think she would like to. But under persuasion she had purchased some little pieces of ivory and brought them home with her intending to make experiments. Up to that time she had done some illustrating and decorative painting, work on china and in commercial design, good work, but not of a kind supposedly advancing. Back in Newburyport, her home, Miss

Hills set to work, secured some young girls to sit for her and employed her medium as best she could. The result was amazing. In a very short time seven miniatures were completed and a new vital personality in the world of art discovered. For from the moment Miss Hills took up miniature painting she stood, not only alone, but in the forefront of those in this field of endeavor, coming as it were, full-fledged into her own.

She had no traditions, she had not studied the miniatures of the earlier masters. She selected her own road and followed it fearlessly. Her expression was perfectly natural and at the same time simple, and although it has since been improved and refined, it is today much as it was then, broad, frank, and very individual. Obviously Miss Hills had genius, that inborn gift without which



MRS. GEORGE W. CHADWICK



DAFFODILS



THE YELLOW SCARF



MISS RITH GRAVES

MINIATURES BY LAURA COOMBS HILLS



MISS MARGARET CURZON HALE LAURA COOMBS HILLS

no amount of training can really avail. She had, furthermore, industry and a keen sense of values. She saw clearly and was not afraid. Competition naturally stimulates effort, but it sometimes leads to confusion. Miss Hills was mercifully saved from the self-consciousness so often, unluckily, bred by art school life. Her outlook was impersonal, unhampered, genuine. She had something to do and she did it as well as she could, the way it seemed to her it should be done. That this way coincided fundamentally with that followed by those in the past who had achieved success was not mere accident, but rather proof of the universality of art, the common basis upon which art at its best is built.

Miss Hills not only sees clearly and accurately, but has what is essential to portrait painting, real insight into character, and she is heartily in sympathy with her fellows. People interest her and she is quick in discerning their real individuality. To this trait of character some of her suc-

cess as a portrait painter may well be attributed.

She also has a fine sense of color and her miniatures are not infrequently primarily color schemes, painted with the purpose of setting forth lovely harmonies and contrasts. She paints broadly, less so than at first, but still more broadly than the majority, yet her miniatures never have the appearance of haste, nor do they lack finish. The color is as a rule applied in broad washes and is clear and vital. Sometimes it is rich and dark, at other times sparkling and delicate, but it is always in effect transparent and the lovely tone of the ivory beneath is invariably preserved.

There is nothing photographic about Miss Hills' miniatures. Though they are small in dimensions (about the size of the reproductions given herewith) they are large in effect, and the mere matter of size is forgotten—the work in itself is big and strong, and it is that which signifies.

The people she paints, moreover, are real



GIRL WITH VIOLETS
BY LAURA COOMBS HILLS

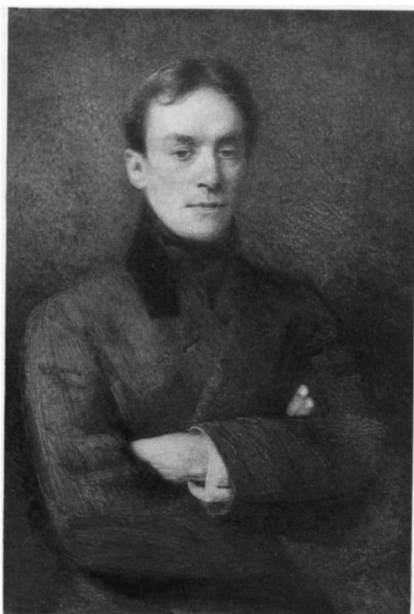
people, individual, vivid, not mere puppets posing, nor fashion plates. She has exceptional success in securing satisfactory likenesses without in even the smallest degree sacrificing the demands of art. Her portraits are intimate and yet at the same time dignified. They have that quality which may be designated as style, but they are subtle and reticent. In other words they are essentially human, many-sided, real interpretations of character and personality seen and interpreted by one possessing both sympathy and individuality. For distinction in portraiture is derived not alone or most often from the sitter, but from the painter, the recorder, who is of course all this and much more.

Miss Hills' miniatures (and she has painted over 200), have pictorial quality which is a little unusual and very charming. As large canvases rendered in oils, they would be found decorative and impressive. Not a few suggest action, as for example "Daffodils," but they are never restless. In the painting of children Miss Hills has been especially successful, but her miniatures of men and women (children of fuller years) are no less satisfying nor sympathetic. The reproductions given herewith go to show the wide range of her achievement.

Miss Hills as a rule spends her summers in Newburyport and her winters in Boston. She is a tireless worker, painting every forenoon whether she has orders or not, loving her work and going to it invariably with enthusiasm, the same enthusiasm that she brings to her play. She is a boon companion and valued friend, one who will always retain the joyousness of youth, looking upon life itself as a great adventure, and going out to meet it with courage and expectation, that expectation which would and usually does discover something delightful at each new turning of the road.

She has exhibited in London and frequently in this country, and has received not only the highest commendation for her work but numerous much coveted awards.

Miss Hills became a member of the Society of American Artists in 1897, and an associate member of the National Academy of Design in 1906. She is also a member of the American Society of Miniature Painters, of the Copley Society and the Guild of Boston Artists. L. M.



MR. ARTHUR HARLOW
BY LAURA COOMBS HILLS